JS 44 (Rev. 04/21)

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The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS							
Kathleen Gallelli				Reliance Standard Life Insurance Company						
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Philadelphia (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)				County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Philadelphia (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)						
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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		,s, Laara C. Mattidool								
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# Case 2:21-cv-01902 Case Description of Pennsylvania Page 2 of 15 for the Eastern district of Pennsylvania

#### DESIGNATION FORM

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff:	Philadelphia, PA 19145			
	arket Street, #1200, Philadelp	hia, PA 19103		
	1700 Market Street, #1200, Ph	niladelphia, PA 19103		
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:				
Case Number: Judge	:1	Date Terminated:		
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered to any o	f the following questions:			
Is this case related to property included in an earlier num previously terminated action in this court?	bered suit pending or within one year	Yes No 🗸		
Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out pending or within one year previously terminated action		Yes No 🗸		
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a p numbered case pending or within one year previously ter		Yes No 🗸		
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social case filed by the same individual?	security appeal, or pro se civil rights	Yes No 🗸		
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is / is / it this court except as noted above.	is not related to any case now pending or wit	hin one year previously terminated action in		
DATE: 04/26/2021 /s/ Laura C. Mattiacci		89643		
	Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff	Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)		
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category only)				
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## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

#### CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

CIVIL ACTION

<u> Fel</u> ephone	FAX Number	<b>E</b> -I	Mail Address		
215-545-7676	215-565-2852	matt	tiacci@consolelaw.com		
Date	Attorney-at-lav	v Att	torney for		
4/26/2021	/s/ Laura C. Mo		ntiff, Kathleen Gallelli	-	
(f) Standard Management –	Cases that do not fall	l into any one of the oth	ner tracks.	(x)	
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(c) Arbitration – Cases requ	ired to be designated	for arbitration under Lo	ocal Civil Rule 53.2.	( )	
(b) Social Security – Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits.					
(a) Habeas Corpus – Cases l	brought under 28 U.S	.C. § 2241 through § 22	255.	( )	
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(Civ. 660) 10/02

Kathleen Gallelli

#### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

: KATHLEEN GALLELLI :

Philadelphia, PA 19145 **CIVIL ACTION NO.** 

Plaintiff,

v.

RELIANCE STANDARD LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

**1700 Market Street #1200 JURY TRIAL DEMANDED** :

Philadelphia, PA 19103

Defendant.

#### **COMPLAINT**

#### I. **INTRODUCTION**

Plaintiff was terminated by Defendant at the age of fifty-nine (59) after she complained of age discrimination. Plaintiff is a Human Resources ("HR") professional with over twenty-five (25) years of experience, and she last held the position of Talent Acquisition Partner at Defendant. Defendant consistently rated Plaintiff's performance as "Fully Satisfactory" or "Commendable" and she had no disciplinary issues until her sixty (60) years old supervisor was pushed out because of his age, and Plaintiff started reporting to Patrick Wicks ("Wicks"), age thirty-eight (38). Wicks treated Plaintiff in a hostile and dismissive manner. Shortly after Plaintiff objected to an age-based comment made by one of Wicks' substantially younger direct reports, Plaintiff was placed on an unwarranted Performance Improvement Plan ("PIP"). Plaintiff complained verbally and in writing of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> All allegations as to ages of individuals other than Plaintiff are made to the best of Plaintiff's knowledge.

age discrimination. Despite being told by her supervisors that she was successfully complying with the terms of the PIP, Defendant terminated Plaintiff's employment and hired a twenty-seven (27) years old, less qualified, employee to replace her. The termination has had a devastating impact on Plaintiff, financially and emotionally.

Plaintiff now brings claims pursuant to the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 621, et seq. ("ADEA"), the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act, as amended, 43 P.S. §951, et seq. ("PHRA"), and the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance, as amended, Phila. Code § 9-1100, et seq. ("PFPO"). Plaintiff seeks injunctive and declarative relief, damages, including economic, compensatory, liquidated, and punitive damages, attorneys' fees and costs and all other relief this Court deems appropriate.

#### II. PARTIES

- 1. Plaintiff, Kathleen Gallelli, is an individual and a citizen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. She resides in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- 2. Plaintiff was born in April 1959 and was age fifty-nine (59) when Defendant terminated her employment.
- 3. Defendant, Reliance Standard Life Insurance Company, is an Illinois corporation that is registered and authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with a principal place of business and administrative office located at 1700 Market Street, Suite 1200, Philadelphia, PA 19103.
- 4. Defendant is engaged in an industry affecting interstate commerce and regularly does business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
  - 5. At all times material hereto, Plaintiff worked out of Defendant's former

principal place of business and administrative office at 2001 Market Street, Suite 1500, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

- 6. At all times material hereto, Defendant employed more than twenty (20) employees.
- 7. At all times material hereto, Defendant acted by and through its authorized agents, servants, workmen, and/or employees acting within the course and scope of their employment with Defendant and in furtherance of Defendant's business.
- 8. At all times material hereto, Defendant acted as an employer within the meaning of the statutes which form the basis of this matter.
- 9. At all times material hereto, Plaintiff was an employee of Defendant within the meaning of the statutes which form the basis of this matter.

#### III. <u>JURISDICTION AND VENUE</u>

- 10. The causes of action which form the basis of this matter arise under the ADEA, the PHRA, and the PFPO.
- 11. The District Court has jurisdiction over Count I (ADEA) pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1331.
- 12. The District Court has jurisdiction over Count II (PHRA) pursuant to 28U.S.C. §1367.
- 13. The District Court has jurisdiction over Count III (PFPO) pursuant to 28U.S.C. §1367.
  - 14. Venue is proper in the District Court under 28 U.S.C. §1391(b).
- 15. On or about March 28, 2019, Plaintiff filed a Complaint of Discrimination with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ("PHRC") complaining of acts of

discrimination and retaliation alleged herein. The Complaint was cross-filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"). Attached hereto, incorporated herein and marked as Exhibit "1" is a true and correct copy of the PHRC Complaint of Discrimination (with personal identifying information redacted).

- 16. On or about June 4, 2019, Plaintiff filed an Amended Complaint of Discrimination with the PHRC complaining of acts of discrimination and retaliation alleged herein. The Amended Complaint was cross-filed with the EEOC. Attached hereto, incorporated herein and marked as Exhibit "2" is a true and correct copy of the Amended PHRC Complaint of Discrimination (with personal identifying information redacted).
- 17. On or about February 1, 2021, the EEOC issued to Plaintiff a Notice of Right to Sue. Attached hereto, incorporated herein and marked as Exhibit "3" is a true and correct copy of that Notice (with minor redactions for purposes of electronic filing of confidential/identifying information).
- 18. Plaintiff is filing this complaint within ninety (90) days of her receipt of this Notice.
- 19. Plaintiff has fully complied with all administrative prerequisites for the commencement of this action.

### IV. <u>FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS</u>

- 20. Plaintiff was hired by Defendant on or about September 2, 2014.
- 21. Plaintiff consistently performed her job duties in a highly competent manner.
  - 22. Plaintiff last held the position of Talent Acquisition Partner.
  - 23. Plaintiff last reported to Patrick Wicks (38), Director, Talent Acquisition.

- Wicks (38) reported to Robin Harris (49), Senior Vice President of Human Resources. Harris (49) reported to Christopher Fazzini (56), President and Chief Executive Officer.
- 24. Before Plaintiff began reporting to Wicks (38), Plaintiff had been reporting to Paul Champi (59), Assistant Vice President, Human Resources.
  - 25. In or about August 2017, Defendant pushed out Champi (59).
  - 26. In or about November 2017, Plaintiff began reporting to Wicks (38).
  - 27. Plaintiff was the oldest employee reporting to Wicks (38).
  - 28. Wicks (38) had no role in Plaintiff being hired.
- 29. Before Plaintiff began reporting to Wicks (38), Plaintiff had no performance or disciplinary issues and no indication that she was underperforming or that her job was in jeopardy.
- 30. Before Plaintiff began reporting to Wicks (38), she received positive performance reviews.
- 31. In April 2018, Wicks (38) told Plaintiff that she should look for a position outside of the Human Resources Department.
- 32. In September 2018, Defendant hired Kelly Johnson (24), Talent Acquisition Specialist, reporting to Wicks (38).
- 33. Defendant treated Plaintiff worse, and in a more hostile and dismissive manner, than the younger employees, including Johnson (24).
- 34. In or about mid-November 2018, Plaintiff heard Johnson comment that another employee was "older than dirt." Plaintiff objected to Johnson's comment, and told Johnson (24) that she could not state that an employee is "older than dirt."
  - 35. Employees of Defendant used the word "old" when discussing employees

and their ages.

- 36. On November 27, 2018, in a meeting with Wicks (38) and Viola Lazzar (61), Senior Human Resources Business Partner, Defendant placed Plaintiff on a PIP.
  - 37. The PIP was scheduled to run for two (2) months.
- 38. Before the PIP meeting, Plaintiff had no indication that Defendant allegedly found her performance deficient.
  - 39. Defendant unjustly criticized Plaintiff's behavior and performance.
- 40. Plaintiff was reprimanded for telling Johnson (24) that she could not state that an employee was "older than dirt."
- 41. Plaintiff complained that Johnson (24) should not state that an employee was "older than dirt," since it was obviously an age-based comment.
- 42. Johnson (24) was praised, and Plaintiff was told that Johnson (24) was a welcomed addition to the department.
- 43. Plaintiff complained that Defendant was treating Johnson (24) much better than Plaintiff.
- 44. Plaintiff was Wicks' only direct report who was placed on a PIP on November 27, 2018.
- 45. Defendant failed to provide Plaintiff with any explanation as to how her performance was allegedly worse than that of younger and noncomplaining employees who were not placed on a PIP.
  - 46. Plaintiff complied with the terms of the PIP.
- 47. On December 3, 2018, Plaintiff provided to Wicks (38) her written rebuttal to the PIP.

- 48. In Plaintiff's written rebuttal, she complained of age discrimination.
- 49. Plaintiff complained that she "find it offensive that the word 'old' is frequently used when discussing people and referring to their ages." Plaintiff complained that, "[a]s an example," she "was told, 'he is older than dirt."
- 50. Wicks (38) refused to discuss Plaintiff's rebuttal, including her age discrimination complaints, with her.
  - 51. Defendant did not investigate Plaintiff's complaints of age discrimination.
- 52. Defendant failed to remedy or prevent the age discrimination against Plaintiff.
- 53. In or about early January 2019, Plaintiff was told by Harris (49) that it had been a while since she had studied and attended school. Plaintiff understood this comment, and the tone in which it was said, to be evidence of an age bias.
- 54. Plaintiff was held to a more stringent standard than the younger employees at Defendant were held.
  - 55. On or about January 26, 2019, Plaintiff's PIP ended.
- 56. On March 6, 2019, in a meeting with Wicks (38) and Lazzar, Plaintiff's performance was criticized and Plaintiff was treated in a hostile and demeaning manner.
- 57. On March 6, 2019, in a second meeting with Wicks (38) and Lazzar, Defendant terminated Plaintiff's employment, effective immediately.
  - 58. Defendant presented Plaintiff with two (2) options: resign; or be terminated.
- 59. The stated reason for Plaintiff's termination was that "this [wa]s not the position for [her]."
  - 60. Plaintiff was Wick's only direct report terminated on March 6, 2019.

- 61. Defendant retained all employees directly reporting to Wicks (38), all of whom were substantially younger: Johnson (24), Talent Acquisition Specialist; Kathleen McAvoy (25), Human Resources Assistant; and Ronda Hill (45), Receptionist. Plaintiff was more qualified to perform these employees' positions.
- 62. Defendant replaced Plaintiff with Kem Ukogu (28), Corporate Functions and Diversity Acquisition Specialist. Plaintiff was more qualified to perform her position and job duties than the substantially younger employee with whom Defendant replaced her.
  - 63. Defendant's stated reason for Plaintiff's termination is pretext.
- 64. Plaintiff's age was a motivating and/or determinative factor in connection with Defendants' discriminatory and retaliatory treatment of Plaintiff, including without limitation placing her on an unwarranted PIP and terminating her employment.
- 65. Plaintiff's opposition to and complaints of age discrimination were motivating and/or determinative factors in connection with Defendant's retaliatory treatment of Plaintiff, including without limitation, placing her on an unwarranted PIP and terminating her employment.
- 66. As a direct and proximate result of the discriminatory and retaliatory conduct of Defendant, Plaintiff has in the past incurred, and may in the future incur, a loss of earnings and/or earning capacity, loss of benefits, pain and suffering, embarrassment, humiliation, loss of self-esteem, mental anguish, and loss of life's pleasures, the full extent of which is not known at this time.
- 67. Plaintiff is now suffering and will continue to suffer irreparable injury and monetary damages as a result of Defendant's discriminatory and retaliatory acts unless

and until this Court grants the relief requested herein.

#### **COUNT I – ADEA**

- 68. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs of this Complaint, as if fully set forth herein.
- 69. By committing the foregoing acts of discrimination and retaliation against Plaintiff, Defendant has violated the ADEA.
- 70. Defendant's violations of the ADEA were intentional and willful under the circumstances, warranting the imposition of liquidated damages.
- 71. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' violation of the ADEA, Plaintiff has suffered the injuries, damages, and losses set forth herein.
- 72. Plaintiff is entitled to all costs and attorneys' fees incurred as a result of the unlawful behavior complained of herein.
- 73. Plaintiff is now suffering and will continue to suffer irreparable injury and monetary damages as a result of Defendant's discriminatory and retaliatory acts unless and until this Court grants the relief requested herein.
  - 74. No previous application has been made for the relief requested herein.

#### **COUNT II – PHRA**

- 75. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs of this Complaint, as if fully set forth herein.
- 76. Defendant, by the above improper and discriminatory and retaliatory acts, has violated the PHRA.
  - 77. Defendant's violations of the PHRA were intentional and willful.
  - 78. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's violation of the PHRA,

Plaintiff has sustained the injuries, damages, and losses set forth herein.

- 79. Plaintiff is entitled to all costs and attorneys' fees incurred as a result of the unlawful behavior complained of herein.
- 80. Plaintiff is now suffering and will continue to suffer irreparable injury and monetary damages as a result of Defendant's discriminatory and retaliatory acts unless and until this Court grants the relief requested herein.
  - 81. No previous application has been made for the relief requested herein.

#### **COUNT III – PFPO**

- 82. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs of this Complaint, as if fully set forth herein.
- 83. Defendant, by the above improper and discriminatory and retaliatory acts, has violated the PFPO.
- 84. Defendant's violations of the PFPO were intentional and willful, warranting the imposition of punitive damages.
- 85. As a direct and proximate result of Defendant's violation of the PFPO, Plaintiff has sustained the injuries, damages, and losses set forth herein.
- 86. Plaintiff is entitled to all costs and attorneys' fees incurred as a result of the unlawful behavior complained of herein
- 87. Plaintiff is now suffering and will continue to suffer irreparable injury and monetary damages as a result of Defendant's discriminatory and retaliatory acts unless and until this Court grants the relief requested herein.
  - 88. No previous application has been made for the relief requested herein.

#### RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Court enter judgment in favor of Plaintiff and against Defendant:

- (a) declaring the acts and practices complained of herein to be in violation of the ADEA;
- (b) declaring the acts and practices complained of herein to be in violation of the PHRA;
- (c) declaring the acts and practices complained of herein to be in violation of the PFPO;
  - (d) enjoining and permanently restraining the violations alleged herein;
- (e) entering judgment against the Defendant and in favor of the Plaintiff in an amount to be determined;
- (f) awarding compensatory damages to make the Plaintiff whole for all lost earnings, earning capacity and benefits, past and future, which Plaintiff has suffered or may suffer as a result of Defendant's improper conduct;
- (g) awarding compensatory damages to Plaintiff for past and future pain and suffering, emotional upset, mental anguish, humiliation, and loss of life's pleasures, which Plaintiff has suffered or may suffer as a result of Defendant's improper conduct;
  - (h) awarding liquidated damages to Plaintiff;
  - (i) awarding punitive damages to Plaintiff;
- (j) awarding Plaintiff the costs of this action, together with reasonable attorney's fees;

- (k) awarding Plaintiff such other damages as are appropriate under the ADEA, PHRA and PFPO; and
- (1) granting such other and further relief as this Court deems appropriate.

#### CONSOLE MATTIACCI LAW, LLC

BY: <u>/s/ Laura C. Mattiacci</u>

Dated: April 26, 2021

Laura C. Mattiacci, Esquire 1525 Locust Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Philadelphia, PA 19102 Telephone: (856) 854-4000 Facsimile: (215) 565-2852 mattiacci@consolelaw.com

Attorney for Plaintiff Kathleen Gallelli